

PREFACE TO PEACE¹

I

BARRIERS TO BE REMOVED

IF we were able to take a God's eye view of our globe and look upon the minds and hearts of men as well as upon their surroundings, we should see walls of suspicion cutting across our most intimate circles, walls of distrust dividing our social classes, walls of prejudice running between races, and walls of hatred separating nations into warring camps. It is not within the scope or the power of this brief discussion to deal with the dynastic and diplomatic, the political and economic barriers to be removed. We shall focus on the mental and spiritual attitudes of the people who have to fight and pay for the wars. The framework of the post-war adjustment will no doubt be set up at formal peace tables—one or several; but an enduring peace can be established only by what people think and say—yes, and eat—at their dinner tables. The tragic tradition of nations is that they declare peace in treaties and then fail to develop peace in the minds of the people.

Ever since Pearl Harbor we have heard the plaint that America was not ready for the war and that much of our subsequent distress has been due to that fact. It may well be asserted that we are less prepared for the forthcoming peace than we were for the war at the time of its declaration thirty months ago. Unless we give ourselves to peace preparedness

¹Rockwell Lectures on Religious Subjects, delivered at the Rice Institute, April 25, 26, and 27, 1944, by Ralph W. Sockman, D.D., Litt.D., LL.D., Minister of Christ Church, Methodist, New York City.

in far more aggressive and universal fashion than is now apparent, the drift of post-war life will at once set in toward the maelstrom of World War III.

The concern of these lectures is not with the terms of the peace to be declared but with the mind-set and the heart-set essential for the peace to be developed. And we begin with certain barriers to be removed.

I. THE PESSIMISM OF THE PHARISEES

To make a rough generalization it might be said that World War I was fought by idealists and the so-called peace following it was made by cynics. Twenty-five years ago our boys went forth to battle, starry-eyed with hope. The period of 1914-1919 was hardly less than epochal in the sudden flowering of great poetry, most of it written on the battlefields. We were the conscripts of a dream. A warless world was to break forth from the chrysalis of chaos and agony.

The peace-making process was superficial. It was an adjustment of externals, not a reconciliation of spirits. And it was external because the peacemakers assumed that the dominant motives of men are low and selfish and will remain so, world without end. Underlying the instability of the peace and the insincerity of such measures as the mandates, was a low conception of what we are and what we want and what we are capable of becoming.

That pessimism of Versailles has naturally been accentuated by succeeding events, which need not be recounted. A second war, more global in character, has confirmed the popular conviction that man is "a fighting animal, always has been and always will be," that history is doomed to be a vicious circle of recurring wars, whose frequency is accelerated by the increasing speed of living.

The result is that skepticism has now permeated the ranks

of those who are waging this war. We have improved the efficiency of our fighting, we are grimly determined to carry on until the enemy is defeated, and we are confident of military victory. But what real and permanent gains will follow our victory? Such questions receive disconcertingly pessimistic answers in circles which normally have been the habitat of hope. Recently a student of one of the most quoted theologians of our day said that his distinguished teacher was now looking forward to World War V. There is tragedy as well as humor reflected in that remark. When the most highly respected interpreters of our Christian faith can see little coming out of this war save the seeds of future conflict, we are sowing the wind of another whirlwind.

To be sure, realistic skepticism is better than sentimental utopianism as a foundation for building a better world. It is ground for hope that we have left behind us Tennyson's smooth confidence that "Nothing walks with aimless feet" and Browning's buoyant optimism that "all's well with the world." It is a mark of sanity that we now realize that wars do not end war. When President Comstock a short time ago delivered her valedictory at Radcliffe, she said that looking back over her years in office, she felt that perhaps the one major mistake in her whole point of view had been that she had underestimated the positiveness of evil. And C. E. M. Joad, whose conversion along with that of C. S. Lewis has been one of the events in the recent history of English churchmanship, declares that the main present source of awakening religious interest is to be found in "the obtrusiveness of evil." The evils of cruelty, savagery, oppression, violence, aggrandizement, lust for power have so obtruded themselves that they become more difficult to explain away by the various methods recently in vogue. There is a deepened awareness of the powerful, hidden, nameless forces on which human life is borne as on a tide.

Now if this consciousness of evil were leading us to an old-fashioned conviction of sin, there would be hope of repentance and redemption. But the evidence of such a prevalent penitential attitude is not yet apparent. The barrier of pharisaical pride keeps us from the searching self-scrutiny which is the prelude to salvation from our social sin of war. "The economic pride of America, the political pride of Britain, the ideological and national pride of Russia, and the particularistic bigotry of every last virtuous nation are positive forces in history."¹ Piously through pulpit and press we confess that the war is a judgment on the sins in which we are all involved; but nevertheless each nation pharisaically thanks God that it is not as the other nations are. We admit that we are bad, but exonerate ourselves because others are worse. In fact, we are so bad and others are so much worse that we resign ourselves to the inevitability of recurring wars.

Hence this war is being fought almost entirely without poetry and music and with a minimum of religious emotion. Professor Bainton of Yale terms this a "just and mournful war."² In such a mood the war can be won, but not the peace. "We are saved by hope." Such saving hope is not the shallow optimism which believes that society can be saved from moral bankruptcy by pooling its depleted human assets. We human beings must go into a divine receivership, declaring ourselves morally bankrupt in our mere human strength and committing our fortunes to a "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness."

II. THE IRRATIONALITY OF OUR HIGHER NATURES

The Epistle of James turns a microscope on the causes of human strife in the question: "Whence come wars and fight-

¹Reinhold Niebuhr, in *The Christian Century*, November 10, 1943, p. 1300.

²*Religion in Life*, Summer 1943.

ings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not."¹ In that answer James is seeing straight but he is looking at too small an area to see the factors which make the vast wars of today. It is naively simple to explain strife between nations as the mere upsurge of man's lower nature. War calls out the beast in man, but it is not the beast which leads man into war.

We cannot deny that untamed and partly tamed impulses tug at the bit, kick, sometimes run away with us. But they are not the drivers who choose the road. They make difficulty for us, they wound and sear us; but they have within themselves no coherence, whereas types of coherence within a self make all the difference between freedom and bondage. "If we conceive the matter in the terms of evolution, then the problem of our bondage centers in the latest-evolved, not the most ancient, phases of human nature; not in raw impulses taken one by one, but in the elaboration of conduct by thought and purpose; not in what is wildest in us, but in what is most civilized and taken for granted."²

If wars were developed and directed from our lower natures, then it would follow that the most danger to our peace lies among our so-called "lower classes," that is, among the uneducated, the unpropertied, those who live most nearly in the raw. But the fact is that our major social perils have had their start above the "lower classes." It was not the riff-raff of Berlin that conceived and engineered the invasion of Poland nor the peasants of Japan who plotted the attack on Pearl Harbor. Or consider our domestic civic dangers. Corrupt politics, burdensome governmental bureaucracies, sectionalism, race hatreds—these do not spring from the less privi-

¹James IV, 1-2.

²George A. Coe, *The Motives of Men* (New York: Scribner, 1929), p. 163.

leged classes, however much these classes may have been used by leaders. If, as we commonly believe, civil government reaches its lowest level in our cities, its cause lies not in the character of the masses of city dwellers, but in the forces that organize them, use them, and exploit them for profit or for the advancement of a political party and the financial interests back of it.

The people of low intelligence and beggarly existence are a potential menace to peace at home and abroad. But that potentiality becomes actual only when the more intelligent and the more well-to-do lead or force them to action which they themselves did not originate. Leaders and demagogues may incite or inflame them to action. The better privileged classes above them may drive them to revolt through repression. But remember the driving control is in the minds of the leaders and not in the lower natures of the led.

Our irrationality is shown by our proneness to put the blame on our lower natures and on the lower classes. The search for scapegoats is a childish game of hide-and-seek which adult minds should have outgrown, but it still remains the most popular expedient for explaining and expurgating evils. Our grandfathers laid the blame for their misbehavior at the door of a personal Devil. We have psychoanalyzed the Devil and think that we have located his residence in the animal substructure of our human nature. And we have socialized his Infernal Majesty into the mass brutishness of our enemies, at home and abroad. But the Devil-pursuing complex still tends to distract us from attacking the real seats of responsibility. During the last war we thought the Devil was incarnate in the Hun, and, when we had beaten the Germans, we turned upon the devils whom we thought we saw nearer home. The aftermath of foreign war was the internecine strife between Gentiles and Jews, between whites

and blacks, between Roman Catholics and Protestants, between Fundamentalists and Modernists. And signs appear on the horizon warning that the sequence of this war may surpass in stupidity and suffering the strife of the Ku Klux Klan days during the 1920's.

The search for scapegoats eases our consciences but does not eradicate our evils. It causes us to kill the sinners and keep their sins.

We show our irrationality also by the over-simplification of our perverse natures. We excuse the failure of reforms on the ground of what we call man's "innate selfishness." What is more, we withhold ourselves from the support of proposed reforms by saying that man is too selfish to make them work. This offering of "innate selfishness" is a lazy and naive explanation. It fails to probe the puzzling paradoxes of our nature, such, for example, as our mixed motives.

Consider, for instance, the mixture of patriotism plus profiteering. How is it possible for citizens to profess intense patriotism and utter devotion to winning the war at the very moment when they try to extort high payment for their support of it? Do they want the war for the sake of the profits it brings? No, for it costs them their sons, whom they give with alacrity. Here is a sincere willingness to sacrifice blended with a self-seeking, profit-making business enterprise. We cannot call this pure "innate selfishness." Conduct is here conditioned by the habitual meanings which life has acquired. We have come to assume that one must make profits from every move. Otherwise what is the incentive? It is the profit-motive which turns the wheels of all machinery, so why not of wars, even though they cost us the lives of our dearest?

War brings out both the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in us. But we should not forget that it was Dr. Jekyll who con-

cocted the potions which unleashed the Mr. Hyde within him. And the doctor's fatal error was that he did not destroy the formula. Shall we surrender to the beast within us because we refuse to destroy the beast-releasing formulas which our intelligence concocts?

Another mark of our irrationality is our enslavement to the cult of comparisons. What was said of certain foolish ones in an earlier day is still timely: "They, measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."¹ Men thus check their own growth by self-invitation. This mutual copying of one another constitutes respectability.

Disregarding uncomfortable ethical absolutes, respectability measures conduct in terms of the average performance. Conventional standards have their value but they lack moral range and objectivity. As in the case of the rich young man who came to Jesus, we can keep the Ten Commandments and yet lack the one thing that can redeem our lives. It is one thing to be respectable enough to do our duty as we see it; it is another to be good enough to discover what our full duty is. It is one thing to have a gentleman's code of truth which makes us keep our word; it is another to have a Christian concern for truth which causes us to find out the facts. It is one thing to have a respectable distaste for unrighteousness; it is another to hunger and thirst after righteousness with a redemptive passion.

Respectability standardizes our compromises by using them as precedents. It restricts our range of moral vision to the codes of our class or nation. When we talk about man's depravity, we must not overlook the irrationality and intransigence of our respectable faults. In twentieth-century America as in first-century Palestine, it is the respectable

¹II Corinthians X, 12.

groups rather than the outcasts who offer the stiffer resistance to Christ's redemptive program.

Another barrier to a better order is the moral awkwardness of "good" men. Good men are ever getting in the way of the good. Look back over the changes which have made for social progress, and observe those who opposed them at the time of the change. Religion does not escape condemnation at this point. The prophets of religion have called men to the vision of new horizons and to the struggle toward new social gains. On the other hand, there is scarcely a form of meanness or narrowness that has not had sometime or somewhere the sanction of religion. Religion has promoted both candor and prejudice, both stubbornness and sweet reasonableness, both ruthlessness and gentleness.

"The worst human conflicts are conflicts between righteous men who are too self-righteous to know how evil they are. They are conflicts between nations and cultures who do not recognize how partial and relative is every value of human devotion. It is the human effort to make our partial values absolute which is always the final sin in human life; and it always results in the most bloody of human conflicts. Human conflicts are so terrible precisely because human beings are always engaged in the pretension of being like God, that is, fighting for some absolute and final good. A profound religion does not abolish all conflict in human history. But it mitigates every conflict by making men conscious of their creatureliness and finiteness."¹

III. BLIND SPOTS OF BETTER PEOPLE

Even our so-called "better people" wear the badges of their finitude. In appraising some of these limitations we

¹W. A. Visser 't Hooft and J. H. Oldham, *The Church and its Function in Society* (Chicago: Willett, Clark and Co., Oxford Conference Books, 1937), p. 215, quoting from *Doom and Dawn*, by Reinhold Niebuhr and George S. Eddy (New York: Kirby Page, World Problem Series, No. 22, 1936).

should be lenient. Men's faculties of sight and hearing are no greater than they were when civilization began. Their working day has not grown in length. Yet with these continuing limitations men have to deal with problems which, owing to the increase of scale, have become different not merely in degree but in kind. We have been catapulted from local community interests into the midst of world problems. What men do on the other side of the world affects the conditions of living on our street. Into our ears the hourly developments of the world's news are blared. Our literature is put up in tabloid form so that he who runs may read. Our thinking is done at high tempo. The pace of developments has become so rapid that situations change far more swiftly than the patterns of thought with which men try to meet them. Under such conditions, it is almost inevitable that there should be a lag between good will and clear vision. Things happen too fast for men with good intentions to see clearly the moral implications and applications of events.

But some of our defective vision is due to blind spots. Many of the tensions of today are not modern in the sense that they derive from science, technology, or industry. The most troublesome of all the tensions which contribute to our fears and disunities pertain to ancient diversities in culture, in race, and in religion. And here we come to that very difficult mental defect, prejudice.

A prejudice is a judgment or opinion formed without due examination of the facts essential to a just and impartial determination. It is a learned response that has gotten into the subconscious and become fixed emotionally.

The forms of prejudice are manifold. That blind unreason which shutters the mind against the light of logic and refuses to look facts in the face—that is prejudice. Those little preconceptions which cause the mind to jump to conclusions

without looking for reasons—that is prejudice. That cold predisposition which closes the heart against the approaches of affection and cruelly judges before it hears the defense—that is prejudice. That vampire of suspicion which flies about in the darkness of ignorance and sucks the blood of ruddy hopes and healthy enterprises—that is prejudice. That smouldering dislike of the different which can flame into a rage of hatred against foreigners and pioneers and saints and even saviors—that is prejudice.

Prejudice is a sin which every one denounces and almost no one seriously confesses. It is difficult to dislodge from the human mind because the possessor either does not think he has it or does not think it a dangerous sin if he has. Most of us admit that we have some prejudices and smile about them as if they were harmless foibles. Narrow-minded persons do not come crying to be saved from their prejudices. It is this self-deception and self-satisfaction which serve to make prejudice so baffling.

Sins of the mind can be so much more subtly dangerous than sins of the body. The latter, such as lust or intemperance, usually leave their open marks and thereby are likely to induce a sense of shame and a spirit of repentance. But mental sins, such as prejudice or pride, beget no bodily brakes which serve to check their progress. For this reason the Master had a harder time with them than with the flagrant vices of the outcasts and the derelicts. In the presence of Jesus' purity the Magdalenes grew repentant; in the atmosphere of Jesus' honesty the publicans became conscience-stricken; but the prejudiced minds of the respectable Pharisees only grew the harder. After Jesus had tried vainly to soften them with the warmth of his love and to pierce them with the shafts of his ridicule, he said to them bluntly, "The publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before

you.” Hence while prejudice is not one of those colorful sins against which we can arouse a popular crusade because it does not put its possessors in the gutter or in prison, it is nevertheless one of the most stubborn and sinister.

Whence come these prejudices of ours? It would seem at times that they derive from thin air. As was said by one of the victims, “Prejudice, like the spider, makes everywhere its home and lives where there seems nothing to live on.” But when we look more closely we can discover some materials out of which these webs of prejudice are woven.

One of these sources is social inheritance. It has been said that we are tattooed with the beliefs of our tribe while we are yet in our cradles. At a surprisingly early age we take on the unreasoned likes and dislikes of our families, our friends, our communities. Many of our dislikes develop in that hazy half-vision of childhood before the clear light of analytical reason dawns; and when we become men we do not put away the childish things. We still see through a glass darkly. It is highly important that we should watch the juncture between the older and younger generations in order to prevent the children from catching the prejudices of the parents.

We adults should not only endeavor to keep our prejudices from discoloring the fresh minds of youth, but we should cultivate the viewpoint of the young in order to emancipate ourselves from our own narrow-mindedness. In this way son and daughter can help in “bringing up father,” not in the ludicrous manner of the cheap comic supplement but in the serious and imperative fashion Jesus had in mind when he set a child in the midst of some narrow-minded Palestinian elders and said, “Except ye be converted and become as a little child, ye cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven.”

A second source of prejudice is ignorance. We so often dislike because we do not know. In the apocryphal book “The

Wisdom of Solomon," the writer says: "They erred in the knowledge of God . . . they lived in the great war of ignorance, and those so great plagues they called peace. "That old verse is an accurate account of the period which preceded this war. The plagues which the world miscalled peace constituted the great war of ignorance—ignorance of God, ignorance of self, ignorance of others. In earlier days, when means of communication and social interchange were few, some of the prejudices due to ignorance may have been excusable. But now that nations, races, and religions have been brought within range of acquaintanceship, such old prejudices can no longer be pardoned.

Nevertheless they still persist. People had reason to believe that the printing press by disseminating knowledge would break down the barriers of misunderstanding; but the printed word has often been prostituted to foment prejudice rather than to further truth. A European visitor to this country recently laid aside the morning paper with the remark that this is the great "age of lies." The colorless editorials of our great dailies, evolved from the composite mind of an editorial board, do not sway our minds as in the days of a Dana or a Greeley; but the columnists purvey their personal views with a pontifical authority to satellites who supinely accept their statements, which are often distorted in order to make them striking. Viewpoints are also put across to indiscriminating readers through colored views. What the editor cannot convey directly, the reporter can get indirectly. And then so many of us read only the papers which agree with our preconceptions and thus add fuel to our prejudices.

It might be expected that travel would free people from their provincial prejudices and serve to bridge the chasms of misunderstanding. We are told that our soldiers are counting much on cheap and popular travel as a reconciling force be-

tween nations after the war. But all too frequently the traveler returns from a foreign place patting his prejudices on the back and making broad generalizations on very insufficient data. An American tourist, for instance, pays his wife's millinery bill in Paris and comes back to say that the French are a nation of unscrupulous shopkeepers. Or an American business man on a Cook's tour around the world talks with a bellboy in a Shanghai hotel and returns to assert that foreign missions are an utter failure. No, travel is not a guaranteed way to dispel prejudice.

It is natural to expect that higher education will emancipate men from the prejudice of ignorance. But often education only gives intellectual sanction to emotional dislikes. A few months ago President Shuster of Hunter College, New York, felt impelled to issue a letter to his faculty which has received wide publicity. In it he said that "while every member of the staff is entitled to his or her opinions, indoctrination in terms of these opinions is clearly limited by the rights of parents who send their daughters to us. Such rights cannot in any way circumscribe the process of scholarly or scientific enquiry, which is inevitably in part subjective. . . . But it is another thing entirely to undermine the courtesy which underlies our necessary acceptance of cultural pluralism by indulging in quite personal attacks on the convictions, sentiments, and legitimate pride of student groups."

Then President Shuster proceeded to list five items of educational "misconduct" which would be punished, as follows:

"Asserting that this war has been wished on the American people and ought not to be supported.

"Asserting that the Papacy and all Catholics are at heart advocates of Nazism and Fascism, and therefore anti-American.

"Asserting that the Jewish group is a 'race,' different from and inferior to other groups in the community, and so unassimilable.

"Asserting that the Russian system of government and the Russian ideology are superior to our own, and by gratuitously injecting propaganda to this effect into classroom discussion.

"Asserting that the Negro is an inferior being, who can legitimately be discriminated against either economically or socially."¹

President Shuster ends by declaring that these forms of misconduct are apparently not hypothetical. Such a letter and the public attention it has received indicate that religious and racial prejudices have invaded the academic precincts.

Prejudice and bigotry thrive on ignorance, but intelligent persons frequently are bigoted because they are uninformed in fields of knowledge that have not come within their range of study.

And in this day of specialization, a person may sift scientifically the data in the field of his own cultivation, and be superstitiously gullible in areas outside his specialty. The evils of this situation are enhanced by the fact that personal prestige gained in one field gives weight to unintelligent opinions expressed in another.

Certainly it would be supposed that our Hebrew and Christian religious faiths with their common doctrine of Divine Fatherhood would break down the barriers to brotherhood. But it is humiliating to confess that religious bodies have frequently been fomenters of prejudice. Liberal members of the Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant bodies have been meeting in discussion groups to seek a better understanding between the members of these great religious groups.

¹Reprinted in the *New York Herald Tribune*, February 17, 1944

At these round tables it has been repeatedly brought out that despite all our public protestations of friendship, there is given little opportunity to the members of any one religious body to know the facts about the others. What the average Protestant Church member, for instance, knows about Judaism or Roman Catholicism is gleaned from the literature of his own church rather than from the writings of the other groups. And very often, it must be admitted, we take our supposed information from anonymous and irresponsible sources. In the absence of authentic inside knowledge regarding other religious faiths, all sorts of rumors and misinformation rise to poison and prejudice the minds.

A third source of prejudice is *fear*. Fear is at the root of more unfair dislikes than we commonly realize. Take, for example, the prejudice against foreigners. Natives do not dislike the foreigner merely because he is unlike. In fact, as long as there are only rare specimens they may arouse a friendly curiosity, and interest. In certain social circles, personages of foreign birth may be lionized. But let the foreign contingent become sufficiently numerous, and fears are aroused. Labor becomes hostile at the threat to its standards of living. The medical profession becomes alarmed at the number of refugee doctors. College administrators must use care not to take on too many teachers of foreign extraction. Take the temperature of the hostility toward our Japanese residents and see how it rises as you approach the western coast where the fear of commercial competition surpasses the considerations of national defense.

Or consider the antipathies between the races. My observations in the south, though very limited, lead to the conclusion that racial bitterness is largely confined to the circles wherein economic rivalry raises fears of lowered standards. Harlem and Detroit bear out this belief. When property

values and economic opportunities are involved, theories of racial brotherhood meet their acid test. There was no "Jewish problem" in America until after the Russian pogroms started a tide of immigration which aroused the economic fears of our people.

Or turn to the realm of the religious groups. How much of the hostility which exists is due to differences of creed and how much to fear, conscious or unconscious, that the other might secure too much control of the social and governmental institutions? At the Harvard Seminar of fifteen years ago, which pioneered the way for the round tables fostered by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, it was brought out that what seems to be religious prejudice in some cases is not religious prejudice at all, but a feeling of antagonism developed when groups formerly unequal approach equality. Then the lines become tightly drawn. The rivalry resultant is not religious at all, but a secular struggle for social, economic, or political security or supremacy. It was the influx of Irish in the last century which largely gave rise to the friction between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Whenever any group, religious, racial, or national, fears its prestige or prerogatives threatened by another group—there you have fertile ground for prejudice and bigotry.

And one noteworthy phase of this fear element is that in its economic aspects it is most marked among those who are seemingly the more secure. Our fear of insecurity seems to increase with our "securities." As Herbert Agar points out in his *Time for Greatness*, we are a plot-haunted people; and our fears seem to grow with our possessions. We are prone to identify ourselves with our possessions, and then the more widely we spread ourselves, the more economic and social coastline we have to defend. Whence come so many of our fears about money? Is it the danger that we shall be deprived

of life's necessities? No, what troubles us is that we crave wealth for power and prestige and not merely for use. As we say, we want to keep in the swim, and by that we mean not that we are afraid of actual drowning, but that we want to look well on the beach. If we could only forget these social comparisons and, as Jesus commanded, seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, so many of our fears would lose their power to hurt us. Luther once wrote to a fellow monk at Erfurt: "I know from my own experience, as well as from all troubled souls, that it is solely our self-conceit which is at the root of all our disquietude." Perhaps Luther's statement is a bit too sweeping. But take away our self-conceit, our concern for credit, our pride of prestige, and see how many of our fears would flee, carrying with them a large cargo of our prejudices.

If we are to remove the barriers of prejudice we must check our prevalent attitude of living on the defensive. The evils of such living are cumulative. Distrust begets distrust and then poisons both possessors. Prejudice feeds on the belief in counter-prejudice.

Very much of our defensive attitude is due to the defects of our inner lives. Perhaps there is a double meaning in Our Lord's question: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" Ordinarily we treat that as a rhetorical question designed to ridicule our tendency to look after others' defects before we remove our own. But consider that as a real query: Why do we behold the mote in our brother's eye and consider not the beam in our own eye? Is it not because the beam in our own eye appears to us as a defect in the other's eye?

It is our inner insecurity which gives rise to our defense mechanisms. This is true in our personal lives. We keep up the strain of pretense because we do not wish others to see

us as we are. We put up a blustering bluff when we have a weak case. This principle may be seen in the religious sphere. When men become nervously concerned for orthodoxy it is a sign of some lurking skepticism within their own belief. Faith that is sure of itself does not feel the need of noisily defending its creeds. Nations, likewise, illustrate the principle that inner insecurity accentuates outer defensiveness. When governments find their domestic programs under fire, foreign danger is stressed in order to distract attention.

Thus fear and prejudice interplay. And there is always an army of pernicious propagandists ready to reinforce both. Among the curses of contemporary life are those persons who play upon the fears and prejudices of others. The apostle of bigotry employs a technique that is often effective with intelligent men. He lays a foundation of falsehood having the appearance of truth, and in our day he employs for this foundation every means of communication known to man. If a lie is told often enough, it is said, even the liar himself will believe it; and it is certainly true that lies have survived many generations of periodic exposure. We cannot stop men from spreading lies. But we can take some of the commercial profit out of the practice. One of our imperative needs is to rid society of the professional writers, secretaries, columnists, and agitators who make a living through catering to the prejudices of people by capitalizing on their fears.

The signs on the present horizon are sinister. The fear of a foreign foe has fused the diverse elements of our American society into a war-time unity. But racial outbreaks such as those in Harlem and Detroit, industrial tensions which reveal a simmering unrest, and cultural antipathies as shown in the rising anti-Semitism—all these portend post-war domestic divisions which may surpass the Ku Klux Klan barbarisms of the 1920's.

The fact that America has escaped more serious consequences of this divisiveness is due to a certain fortunate time element. If the propaganda of fear and hatred had coincided with economic depression, the mob spirit might have broken bounds. If, for example, Henry Ford's anti-Semitic attacks had been made after October 1929 instead of in the Golden Age of prosperity during the Harding-Coolidge era, we might have had a pogrom somewhere in these United States. Put the crowd in rags and feed it on crumbs that fall from the table of the man who still has an income, convince it that Israel's hosts are the cause of its economic inequalities, and that crowd can become a mob on the march, even in America. Had the depression of the 1930's begun in 1920, we hesitate to think what ghastly results might have accompanied a crusade of so powerful and popular a man as Henry Ford was at that time. The amiable Mr. Ford would have been sickened by any acts of cruelty resulting from his attacks, but that fact would not have checked the possibility of such excesses. Luckily for the Jews at that time, there was a chicken in almost every pot and a car in many a day laborer's garage. Also Ku Kluxism's hatred was directed chiefly against the Roman Catholics in the 1920's, and consequently Jews, Negroes, and "foreigners" felt only the glancing blows. But the Jewish leaders of today are alarmed at the prospect of tomorrow. They fear that an industrial depression may arouse a scapegoat complex of which their people would be the chief targets. Some Jewish speakers are calling for a common front with the Negro to protect themselves from the dire possibilities. Others resent such a suggestion, holding that the Jewish minority is a religious and cultural group rather than a racial division.

To be an alarmist often serves to fan the flames which we are trying to put out. Yet to be silent is to let the present

herd-mindedness lead us nearer and nearer to civil strife. Lisa Sergio in a recent public address pointed out that her Italian compatriots were swept into turbulence and bloodshed by demagogues after the last war partly because youth had been taught in the war to kill. Life had come to be regarded as cheap. In such a mood the mob spirit could be easily fomented. Will it be so here? The common sense and patriotism of the majority of the American people would no doubt be equal in the end of repressing such a mob, but not until after irreparable harm had been done. Emergency bridges built after the chasms have been allowed to foam are not adequate to carry the traffic of our desired brotherhood.

The hardened categories into which social, racial, religious, and political prejudices have forced the people of older countries should serve as storm signals to us. We Americans have memorized the catch phrases of democracy and tolerance. But we have not learned the advanced lessons. We of the white Gentile majority do not yet measure our demeanor to make it conform to our responsibility. We underestimate the subtle impact of influence. We forget that the fools who form mobs may be influenced profoundly by the manners and prejudiced deportment of those above them in the social and economic and intellectual scale. Every ill-considered act and word of the influential Gentile are food and drink to the passions of those predisposed to outbursts of passion.

We are deluged with discussions of the problem of minority groups. Ours is primarily the problem of the majority groups. Granted that the Jewish people have cultural characteristics calling for self-treatment, we Gentiles should ask how largely are we responsible for causing the defects which we criticize. Granted that the Negro should seek recognition of his rights by demonstrating his ability rather than by depending on methods of agitation, we of the white race should remember

the Master's injunction that a light must be set on a candlestick before it can "give light to all that are in the house." It is the Negro's duty to let his light shine so that men may see his good works; but it is the white race's responsibility to help lift the Negro light from under the table to the candlestick of equal opportunity.

Now is the time to translate the discussion of racial and religious problems into the experience of Christian fellowship. The war is taking our best; let us surrender our worst. Robert Frost has a poem in which he pictures a New England farmer rebuilding his stone fence. The frost and weather have dislodged some of the stones. And as the farmer replaces the fallen parts and contemplates the continuous care required to keep up his fences, he says to himself, "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." Yes, that something is the God who "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."

Fortunately, from the earliest beginnings America has been blessed with great-minded men who by word and example have protected the nation from the ravages of bigotry and intolerance. The principles of our Founding Fathers and our noble leaders of later days must be vindicated and strengthened now.

When we read the casualty lists of the current war and note the names of Negroes and "foreigners," we see that the blood of all racial and cultural groups blends on the battlefield. If our citizens of all races and classes can die together, why can they not live together? And when we think that on the battlefields today our Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant chaplains are cooperating to give their ministry to men across sectarian boundaries, shall we at home not rise out of our sectarian spirit and match the comradeship of the ministers at the front? Would God that a new spirit of religious

brotherhood might rise from the blood, sweat and tears of this terrible time!

Sholem Asch, a devout Jew, has written, as you know, two best-selling novels. One was *The Nazarene*, published a few years ago, depicting the life of Our Lord; and the other is *The Apostle*, now a current best-seller, based on the life of Saint Paul. Remarkable it is for a loyal Jew to write such reverent books on Christian characters that they should be eagerly read by Christ's followers. When interviewed recently by the editor of the *Christian Herald*, Sholem Asch explained his deed by saying, "Jesus Christ to me is the outstanding personality of all time, both as Son of God and as Son of Man. Everything he ever said or did has value for us today, and that is something you can say of no other man, alive or dead." Sholem Asch was born in Poland. The figure of Christ fascinated his youthful mind. For over thirty years he pondered the writing of his book, *The Nazarene*. But he did not write it in Poland. Why? Let him tell us: "To publish it in Poland would have been to attempt the impossible; my own people would have fought it and the Christians would have fought it. . . . One of the most terrible memories of my childhood is the memory of those un-Christian Christians, who ran in the streets on Good Friday, shouting 'Kill the Crucifiers!' You see, in an atmosphere like that, a Jew does not publish a Life of Christ. And will you say this for me to your American readers? I could never have written *The Nazarene* and *The Apostle* had I not come to America. In this great land is the understanding I had to have; for here the Jew has never been persecuted."

No, thank God, the Jew has never been persecuted in America. And let us pray God that he never will be. Let us, Gentile and Jew, Roman Catholic and Protestant, keep so loyal to the principles of the great Hebrew prophets and the

Galilean Christ that we shall see the worth of every human soul and respect the rights of every person, rich or poor, white or black. And I hope my Jewish friends will agree with me, whether or not they accept Christ as their Messiah, that it is the spirit of Christ which can beget the bonds of brotherhood.